

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 022351

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DRAFTED BY OES/SCI/AE:DBHOYLE

APPROVED BY P - J. SISCO

NEA/AFN:D.JAMESON

P- ARNOLD J RAPHEL

OES - DIXY LEE RAY

S/S - MR. LUERS

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TO USMISSION IAEA VIENNA PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 022351

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:TECH, IAEA, LY

SUBJECT: LIBYAN RESEARCH REACTOR

REFS: (A) US MISSION IAEA 0314; (B) STATE 004961;

(C) US MISSION IAEA 0537

1. FYI: ON JAN. 17, LIBYAN CHARGE AL-GAYED ADVISED BY UNDERSECRETARY SISCO THAT IN SPIRIT LIBYAN DESIRE TO ESTABLISH POSITIVE DIALOGUE WITH U.S., WE WOULD STUDY ESTABLISH POSITIVE DIALOGUE WITH U.S. WE WOULD STUDY LIBYAN REQUEST FOR EXPORT APPROVAL ON U.S. RESEARCH REACTOR IN POSITIVE SPIRIT AND WOULD MAKE PROMPT REPLY. SISCO CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT CHARGE SHOULD NOT PREDICT WHAT FINAL USG RESPONSE WOULD BE. HE NOTED IMPORTANCE OF U.S. PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDE TOWARD DELICATE QUESTION OF NUCLEAR REACTOR EXPORT AND INDICATED THAT SOME POSITIVE PUBLIC EXPRESSION BY LIBYANS OF AWARENESS THAT U.S. IS TAKING LEAD IN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL. END FYI.

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PAGE 02 STATE 022351

2. PRIOR TO THESE DISCUSSIONS, GENERAL ATOMIC OFFICIALS,

WHO HAVE BEEN IN FREQUENT CONTACT WITH ERDA AND DEPT. ON THIS SUBJECT, WERE ADVISED SUBSTANCE REFTEL B. AS A RESULT, GA HAS SUGGESTED TO LIBYANS THAT CONTRACT FOR TRIGA REACTOR BE TERMINATED BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT; NO REPLY TO THIS REQUEST HAS BEEN RECEIVED. PREVIOUS GA EFFORT IN LATE DECEMBER TO HAVE LIBYANS WITHDRAW APPLICATION FOR PROJECT AGREEMENT AT FEBRUARY IAEA BG MEETING, AS REPORTED REFTEL B, WAS REJECTED BY LIBYANS.

3. IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT AT PRESENT MOMENT WHAT EFFECT JAN. 17 DISCUSSIONS AND GA ACTION WILL HAVE ON LIBYAN PLANS TO HAVE PROJECT AGREEMENT ON FEBRUARY BG AGENDA. SINCE ISSUE OF REACTOR SALE IS BUT ONE PART OF OVERALL USG/LIBYAN RELATIONSHIP, AND CANNOT BE VIEWED IN ISOLATION, A FINAL DECISION ON SALE CANNOT BE MADE UNTIL WE HAVE CLEAR IDEA OF OUTCOME OF NASCENT USG/LRG DISCUSSIONS. WE CONSEQUENTLY CONCUR IN MISSION SUGGESTION THAT AGENCY BE INFORMED THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO RESPOND TO LIBYAN REQUEST AT THIS TIME. THEREFORE, IF ASKED AGAIN BY IAEA REGARDING STATUS OF REQUEST, MISSION SHOULD ORALLY INFORM AGENCY THAT REQUEST STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION IN WASHINGTON, AND WE WILL INFORM AGENCY WHEN DECISION MADE.

4. THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT U.S. DECISION WILL BE AVAILABLE IN TIME TO AFFECT FEBRUARY BG CONSIDERATION THIS SUBJECT. KISSINGER

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